

Dear Sirs or Madams:

My name is Richard S. Brown. I am an appellate judge in Wisconsin. I am deaf and use a cochlear implant. I am one of the people participating in the Ultratec Captel trial. As a one-time heavy user of the two-line VCO, I feel qualified to explain how much more beneficial the Captel is and why I believe it should be cleared for unlimited consumer use. There are several reasons why I am an unabashed fan of the Captel. I will list them in no particular order.

The Captel, first of all, is much cheaper to use than the Two-Line for the simple reason that I do not need two phone lines. Second, it is much faster to use than the Two-line. By the time I connect with the person I am calling in a Two-line VCO call, my Captel conversation might already be finished. Third, the Captel system is all in one phone. I don't need a computer attached to a second phone. Fourth, and very important, the Captel transcription is much faster than the VCO translation. The conversation is less cumbersome, more natural and far more efficient. Fifth, I am convinced that Captel technology will eventually allow for cellphone use by persons who are deaf or hearing impaired. This will give people with hearing disabilities the same conveniences afforded normal hearing persons. If the ADA means anything, it means equal access. This technology helps persons with disabilities to achieve that goal. Sixth, people calling a person with a hearing disability have an easier time. They simply call a 1-888 number and give the operator the number being called. The operator then connects with the person who has a hearing disability. This method is far less cumbersome than Two-Line calls. Seventh, the system is very compact and takes up less room. Eighth, persons who are not hearing disabled and who live in the same house with the hearing disabled person are able to switch the Captel off and use it quickly without problem. The presence of a two-line VCO in the house, on the other hand, is daunting for persons who are not familiar with it. Ninth, the future uses of Captel are enormous. I see it being used to help facilitate better communications in courtrooms, for example. I see it being used by persons who hear normally but are in noisy environments.

I could probably list more reasons. Suffice it to say, I now find that I really could not do without my Captel. It is the greatest invention since the cochlear implant! It helps me to do my job and go about my business in a way that I remember doing before I lost my hearing.

I hope that this letter helps in your consideration of this important new product. If you have any questions, I will be happy to answer them. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Brown